REMARKS

Claims 1-29 are pending in this application. In response to the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment, the claim set provided herein is revised to indicate that claims 25 and 26 depend from claim 24 and claims 28 and 29 depend from claim 27, as recited in the claims as originally filed. The previous presentation of these claims as depending from "claim 0" was the result of an inadvertent auto-formatting function in the document, which was set up for automatic claim numbering. Applicants apologize for any inconvenience or confusion this inadvertent error may have caused.

Furthermore, pursuant to correspondence with the Examiner, claims 9, 10, 16 and 17 are amended herein to specifically recite what is deleted from the U3 region of the LTR of claims 5 and 13 as well as what is retained. Support for the amendments to claims 9, 10, 16 and 17 is found in the language of the original claims and on pages 8-9, paragraphs 55-56. Furthermore, pursuant to correspondence with the Examiner, claim 20 is amended herein to recite a "retroviral form plasmid" as requested by the Examiner and step (a) is amended to indicate that the nucleic acid of claim 5 is introduced into the cell in a shuttle vector. Support for this amendment is found on pages 9-10, paragraphs 60-61. Although the Examiner also indicated that claim 20 should be amended to recite that the eukaryotic cell of step (a) should be defined to possess retroviral packaging functions, applicants respectfully point out that claim 20 is directed to a method of producing a single LTR circular retroviral form plasmid by extracting non-integrated DNA from a cell into which the nucleic acid of claim 5 is introduced. The claim does not require that the nucleic acid be packaged or that viral particles be formed, nor is this required or necessarily desirable in order to obtain the claimed circular plasmid from bacterial cells, as described. Support for the invention of claim 20 is found in the specification on pages 9-10, paragraphs 60-61.

In addition, the same reasoning applies to claims 24 and 27, which are screening method claims. It is clear from the teachings of the specification (see, e.g., page 12, paragraphs 68-69) that the nucleic acids of step (a) in both claims 24 and 27 can be introduced into cells that are contacted with or exposed to a test substance to carry out the screening activity recited in the claims without

the nucleic acids being packaged into retroviral particles. Claims 24 and 27 are amended herein to address the Examiner's concerns regarding how the test substance is contacted with the cells as set forth in step (c). Support for this amendment is found in the specification on page 12, paragraphs 68-69). No new matter is added by these amendments and their entry and consideration are respectfully requested.

Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned directly by telephone to discuss these amendments if further issues remain, BEFORE the issuance of a further official action for this application.

No fee is believed due with this response. However, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0220.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION UNDER 37 CFR § 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office via the central facsimile number 571-273-8300 on May 5, 2006 and is addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Tracy Wallace